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Letters to the Editor

Soviet Growth Slows Down

To the Herald Tribune:

Elements of the press and among academicians have expressed surprise at the findings of the Central Intelligence Agency showing a sudden and sharp drop in the rate of Soviet economic growth, and in the fact that the CIA made them public.

I should like to take issue with these reactions.

In 1958 and 1959 Allen Dulles, then director of the CIA, made lengthy speeches on Soviet economic trends, contrasting them with the poor performance of the American economy. Three years later the Joint Economic Committee issued another report on the Soviet economy. We may suppose that some of its authors were CIA analysts.

The earlier statements all stressed the extraordinary rapidity of Soviet economic growth. Dulles in 1959 predicted that "Soviet gross national product will grow at the rate of 6 per cent a year through 1965." Now the agency seems within the space of a year to have reversed directions completely.

This is not the first time that such an unexplained reversal has taken place. In April, 1958, CIA foresaw a growth in industrial production of between 10 and 12 per cent for 1962. In November, 1959, it reduced the forecast to 8 or 9 per cent. In November, 1962, it stated that actual growth in 1961 was between 6 and 7 per cent.

The fact is that Soviet economic growth has not experienced a sudden and sharp slowdown in the last two years. It has instead been slowing down rather steadily for many years.

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